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— Téa Leoni

Lifelike Creatures

Rebecca Baum



Lifelike Creatures by Rebecca Baum

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A thirteen-year-old struggles to keep her addicted mother from self-destructing as a sinkhole threatens their rural Louisiana town.

Thirteen-year-old Tara does whatever it takes to keep her beautiful, audacious, and addicted mother, Joan, from falling through the cracks. Fending off bill collectors, heating meals in the cast iron skillet, and tending to their ramshackle home, Tara steers them safely through Joan's drug and alcohol binges. Hyper-vigilant and taciturn, she has few friends, preferring solitary rambles through the fields and bayous. When a sinkhole forces her rural Louisiana town to evacuate, Tara finds herself homeless and her mother's impulsive personality unleashed. But Joan's raw charisma and plain speak quickly establish her as the public face of the catastrophe. The community rallies around her and social media demands justice. A class action lawyer grooms Joan to play the starring role in a carefully crafted PR campaign. Tara dares to imagine a better life, built upon the proceeds of the settlement the whole town will share, a life that might even include college. But as the spotlight intensifies, and the promise of a settlement looms, Joan's demons return with a vengeance. Tara must decide whether to pull her mother from the brink as she's always done, or let her fall, severing ties with the only family she's ever known.

Lifelike Creatures was inspired by a real-life industrial disaster in 2012, when a sinkhole devastated a small Louisiana town.

Praise for *Lifelike Creatures*

"Baum's impressive debut is plainly told in vivid descriptions and unapologetic language. She handles the struggle between love and blame in parent-child relationships honestly and beautifully in the face of addiction and environmental corruption."

— *Booklist*

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— Téa Leoni

"A story wonderfully told, with vivid description and characters, *Lifelike Creatures* is at once a smash debut and undoubtedly the launch of a bright literary career. Buy this book, it will be something you can brag about in years to come."

— Brian McDonald, author of *My Father's Gun* and *Last Call at Elaine's*

"Raw, sensual, and unapologetic, *Lifelike Creatures* exquisitely examines corporate greed, regional disaster, addiction, and one girl's journey to find solid ground in an unreliable, unforgiving reality. An impressive debut."

— Heather Siegel, author of *Out From the Underworld*



About the Author:

Rebecca Baum is a New York City transplant from rural Louisiana where she was born and raised. *Lifelike Creatures* is her debut novel. In addition to developing new works of fiction, she writes for a creative studio she co-founded. She lives in Greenwich Village with her husband and their cat.

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